The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XXXI *January 26, 1940* NUMBER 14

THE WEEK 293
COLUMNISTS AND PROFESSORS *Louis J. A. Mercier* 296
DARK (*Verse*) *Tom Boggs* 298
RADIO'S HEART THROBS *Robert McDonough* 299
THE POLES REMAIN *C. C. Martindale, S.J.* 300
IRELAND AND ENGLAND *Roger Shaw* 302
TO JESUS: A SALUTATION BEFORE AN OFFERING (*Verse*) *Guillermo V. Sison* 303
VIEWS AND REVIEWS *Michael Williams* 304
COMMUNICATIONS 305
THE STAGE *Grenville Vernon* 307
THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 307
RICHES IN A BIG ROOM *Harry Lorin Binsse* 308
MORE BOOKS OF THE WEEK 309
A Smattering of Ignorance—Artillery of Time—Verdun—The Church Before Pilate
THE INNER FORUM 312

THE COMMONWEAL is indexed in the *Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index* and *Catholic Bookman.*

Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York. Annual Subscriptions: U. S. and Canada, $5.00; Foreign, $6.00.

Editors: PHILIP BURNHAM, EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.; HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor*; MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *Special Editor*; JAMES F. FALLON, *Advertising Manager.*

The Hypnotized

FANTASTIC, TRAGIC, ALARMING are three adjectives that seem best to describe the news of the arrest of seventeen residents of Brooklyn on charges of conspiring to overthrow the government of the United States. These men were members of the "Christian Front," a hazy organization claiming to be devoted to Christianity and the American Way and inimical to communism and atheism. But the Christian Front idea of Christian society and the American Way is very strange. So are its ideas of proper political, economic and social action. Destruction of the Jews was one of these. "Direct action," street demonstrations, control of the gutters—bombs and rifles and setting up a dictator by force are some more.

Share the Blame

It might seem fantastic, of course, that seventeen men should think they could overthrow our government (even Hitler failed in his beer hall); the tragic part of it is that they undoubtedly conceived of themselves as true patriots and Christians while they dreamed their sanguinary dream. The alarming thing is that for their state of mind Catholics are largely responsible, and we shall continue to be responsible for the creation of other groups of hypnotized men, who may carry out their scheming with more tragic results, until we all recognize and nullify the powerful propaganda which directly creates them.

Father Coughlin, the Brooklyn *Tablet, Social Justice* and their many abettors and sympathizers must bear the direct responsibility for the plight of these seventeen young men. For months the *Tablet's* correspondence columns have been the free public forum for the national director of the group, John F. Cassidy. It will not do to say that divergent views have appeared in the same column—letters in that column are picked and chosen, and besides, that is eeling out of it.

In its issue dated only a few days before the arrest of Cassidy & Co., the *Tablet* printed an excoriating editorial ridiculing the Mayor of New York and his police for keeping tabs on street meetings at which "representatives of certain organizations spoke and at which our Jewish fellow-citizens were adversely criticized." That is, of course, eely writing. No names are mentioned. But only the Christian Front comes to the reader's mind.

Father Coughlin has talked of "Franco's way . . . Christian American forces unite to the last man. . . . Rest assured we will fight you and we will win. . . . The Christian Way is the peaceful way until, all argument having failed, all civil authority having failed, there is left no other way but the way of defending ourselves against the invaders of our spiritual and national rights. . . ." That, too, is eely writing, as are the qualifications, amounting to contradictions, which pepper every essay or speech emanating from the Radio Priest. But he, himself, supplies a clue to his real meaning: "Call this inflammatory, if you will. It is inflammatory."

Well, the flames reached the hearts of seventeen—perhaps many more of whom we know nothing; they acknowledge the leadership of the men who set them afire, and they are in jail awaiting trial, but Father Coughlin says he had nothing to do it with. "Buy Christian for Christmas." It wasn't inflammatory, after all. . . .

A Lone-Wolf Hemisphere

THE BOAST of a navy second to none is no longer enough for American big navy advocates. At the hearings on the Vinson Bill, for instance, Admiral Stark said we must be prepared to take on by ourselves the combined forces of Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia at one and the same time. What a yardstick for determining legitimate national defense expenditures! On this basis defense expenditures for the next two or three years are estimated at astronomical figures. It is not surprising that the army chimes in for its share with Secretary Woodring's modest request for at least $300,-

Superiority at any Price

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

000,000 extra for ordnance and engineering items and Assistant Secretary Louis Johnson's objective of arms and munitions for an army of 1,000,000 men. The American people must pay dearly if Congress bows to those who maintain that singlehanded against the fantastic coalition listed above we must be able to defend our shores, possessions, trade routes and the Monroe Doctrine. The people will have to pay drastically increased taxes, work relief and farm benefits will have to be cut well below the family subsistence level and all-important public health work will be badly curtailed. At the same time the other nations of the world will be spurred farther along the fatal Australian pursuit race toward the tantalizing mirage of armament superiority. How rally popular support against big army and navy extremists? If the United States is to be a force for peace in these critical days, the government must not give way to unreasoning fear. And it is folly to seek the peace we want singlehanded.

The Trade Agreements Act

THE TARIFF FIGHT threatens to become as big a political issue this year as it used to be in the classic ages of American politics. Even accepting some of the arguments for the terribly high duties customary in the past, it must be admitted now by even the most rabid protectionists that times have changed. Now the United States is a creditor rather than debtor nation. American industry has grown up until, indeed, it is more developed than anywhere else. Nations are more and more governing their trade relations by new and extra-tariff methods: bartering and quota regulations, for instance. Fewer undeveloped lands are willing to remain dependent on exports of raw materials and imports of manufactured goods. More nations are aiming at more or less complete self-sufficiency. Cartels have risen and declined, but can rise again to get around political duties. The balance in American industry has shifted toward the great automobile manufacturers and exporters.

Ebb and Flow

But the principal question, after all, is still whether we should have a higher or lower tariff. That it should be lower seems almost too obvious to argue about. The effort to get agriculture behind a demand for a rise is particularly fantastic. Farmers have a terrific leverage in tariff matters precisely because it is recognized that industrial tariffs have been at their particular expense. It would be very slick if farmers, ignoring the fundamental position of their export industry and forgetting the traditional farm protests against protection, could be worked into fighting reciprocal agreements and demanding higher rates for themselves and thus helping to lift the whole schedule. The reciprocal trade law, which runs out in June, provides a method of reducing to some extent the suicidal Smoot-Hawley duties which contrasts favorably with the paralyzing log-rolling methods of Congressional tariff activity. If you want a low tariff, the principal objections to the new method may be first, the centralization of power under the executive. The second objection is perhaps most important right now: the executive control over tariffs can be used as a new, "flexible" instrument of national policy in power diplomacy, and as a means of interference in foreign countries. Trade negotiations and trading can be more easily carried on as a trade war by this method than by the old. To the extent one likes or dislikes the executive's general foreign policy one must approve or object to enforcing it with the reciprocal trade powers. Still, considering all objections, the Smoot-Hawley tariff continues to be disastrously high. Until business becomes disillusioned with piratical duties or Congressmen learn how to resist business men's pressure, there is no unobjectionable way out.

Hutchins vs. Kieran on Football

COMPLAINTS about college football are common enough. Every so often the Carnegie Foundation gives statistics on those who are capitalizing on bulky frames, stout hearts and superior coordination to pay their academic way, or some coach is quitting because of lack of material when the administration decides to cut down on athletic scholarships, or some high school halfback can't make up his mind which of a score of institutions of higher learning will pay him the highest salary. No one takes the amateur status of "big-time" football players very seriously. Mr. Hutchins, who has consistently upheld a rather severe ideal of college life, made a lot of good points in explaining the dropping of football by the University of Chicago. Spring training and fall training and distant trips undoubtedly take up a lot of time; big games do distort the function of college in the public mind; football does develop into big business ($115,000 guarantee to each team for one Rose Bowl game, for instance). John Kieran of the New York *Times* and "Information Please" counters with a familiar line of argument: it is not the game but its abuses. He would keep the game for all its benefits to spectators and players and eliminate the principal evils by abolishing gate receipts. This suggestion is stronger logically than in actuality. A sound educational program would include both intramural athletic contests and intercollegiate spectacles for the many. Root or branch, that is the question. From all accounts an evening at "The Male Animal" at the Cort Theatre would suggest a happy answer.

Root or Branch

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Home Is the Place for Quins

FROM NOW ON until the New York World's Fair reopens, there will be an animated debate as to whether the guardians of the Dionne children ought to allow them to be shown there. This paragraph records a "No." It is said that the Provincial Secretary of Ontario and the legal member of the guardians' board, Judge Valin, agree with this paragraph at the present writing. It is also intimated, in more than one realistic subhead and footnote, that their reason for agreeing is an economico-political one: the quintuplets, by attracting visitors to their place of abode, have boomed the whole North Bay section of Ontario, and if they go out of the country, these pleasant tourist dollars will cease to pour in. But we hope that there are other motives as well.

Recording a "No"

Judge Valin is quoted as being solicitous regarding the children's health in the event of their being allowed to come to New York. This means, we trust, that he is solicitous also regarding things more imponderable but even more important. Their health could certainly be guaranteed; but the main consideration, surely, is the children's own rights, and if one pleases, their own dignity as human beings. They are not ordinary children, by a wide margin, and some concession has had to be made to that fact; but in the name of their own welfare, their own self-respect and balance while they are growing up, they should be kept as nearly normal as it is possible to keep them. When they are shown to tourists in Callander, at least that is because tourists take the initiative and make the journey. Altogether different would it be for these children to realize one day that they were brought into another country for money and shown off as among professional exhibits. There is no doubt that the quins would dress up the Fair like nothing else this side of heaven; but though the Fair may need them, they certainly do not need the Fair, and that should end the matter.

Wilderness Voice

IT IS REFRESHING to read anything so forthright and sensible as the recent appeal of Daniel J. Tobin, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, for peace in the ranks of labor. Of course one cannot certify the accuracy of his statement that "Less than one dozen men on both sides are responsible for the division of 8,000,000 organized workers." That division almost certainly creates more than a dozen jobs, and there must be more than literally a dozen men responsible. But grant Mr. Tobin a little poetic license. The substance of what he says is almost certainly true: the division is not a rank-and-file division. And his two points for union should be taken to heart by every labor leader: ". . . because of the weaknesses and jealousies of a few men there is a possibility that the [Wagner] law will perhaps be amended to such an extent that it will be partially destroyed. . . . No Senator or Congressman in Washington today needs to pay much attention to requests from labor because one side is arrayed against the other . . ." The division between AFL and CIO clearly benefits only two classes of people: the labor leaders who would lose their jobs if division disappeared and such industrialists as would be happy to see organized labor lose in power and influence and public sympathy.

Who Benefits?

No More Bare Feet

IT IS ADMITTED that time most ineluctably passes, changing things as it goes. The head of the Children's Bureau, Miss Katharine Lenroot, was probably doing no more than recognizing that truth when she tore the cover from the report on Children in a Democracy, observing as she did so that it was "unfair to American school children to represent them as going to their classes barefoot." In days nearer to the pioneer stage of our national history when the vast majority of children performed most of their tasks and sought all of their pleasures out-of-doors, there was no stigma in being unshod, because almost every child was unshod for a good half of each year. Now, even in the country, the shoeless child is more and more of a rarity —except, of course, in those sections where shoelessness means, not freedom, but poverty and a low standard of living. The change in viewpoint in footgear is not unqualifiedly fortunate, as we think most people would agree; there was more fun, and more health (except, of course, in hookworm areas) in the old days, and the whole business assuredly invites one to reflect on the irrationalities, always freshly surprising, of that piece of work which is man. However, we live so largely by symbols that Miss Lenroot was being merely realistic, probably, in recognizing this one. We end by recording an unworthy, personal and highly irrelevant wonder: we never can understand how it is that someone doesn't think of these things beforehand—in this case, the idea of the sketch, or perhaps its roughing-in, got itself OK'd, when the finished drawing, multiplied by 1200, was destined for the scrap-heap.

Things Have Changed

In Monsignor Ligutti's article, "Catholics in Finland," published January 12, an error crept in somewhere along the line: ". . . it was not until November 14, 1939, that the Vicariate Apostolic was inscribed in the national registry. . . ." This should have been, of course, 1929.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Columnists and Professors

Are newspaper columnists, batting out their daily stints, pointing the way to a new world?

By Louis J. A. Mercier

THE DEATH of Heywood Broun dramatized his conversion as the books he would have written might never have done. Because of it, the New York of newspaper room and theatre, along with hundreds of men and women in all walks of life, found its way into St. Patrick's Cathedral there to be told how one out of its very heart had come to accept gratefully the magisterium of the Catholic Church. As one commentator put it: "That Broun, columnist, radical, militant supporter of lost causes and one of the freest and most individualistic of human beings, should have sought the shelter of so ancient and authoritarian an institution as the Church was a patent paradox."

To analyze this so-called paradox should throw further light on what is an exceedingly significant development: the growing prestige of Catholic thought among our national writers who, day after day, face and try to interpret the fast moving events of our catastrophic times.

Thanks to the moving eulogy of Monsignor Fulton Sheen, we were given enough glimpses of the way which Heywood Broun traveled to see that, far from being a paradox, his coming into the Catholic Church was a most logical step. His characteristic individualism was but the sense of his personal integrity and responsibility. He felt that he had an individual soul, individually immortal. He was thus free from the start from the limitations of naturalism. For him there was no merging of God, man, and the universe. Thus, certain that he was distinct in nature, standing individually before God, he saw that he could not have peace unless he were at one with God. He felt the need of an absolving power for the wrong he had done and the good he had left undone before he could face death without fear. For, by the same token that he believed in God, in the antecedent reality of a righteousness to which the individual should conform if he is to be at peace, to which nations should conform if they are to grow through peace, he had, as he said, the sense of "oughtness," of duty, and he felt humble before the disproportion between what he was and what he ought to be.

But, if he felt individually responsible to God, his peculiar gift of sympathy for his fellow men made him specially aware that if individual souls were distinct, yet God could not care for one apart from all; that humanity was one, one in its creation, in its fall if any and, if there had been a fall, one in its redemption. So the relation of man to God must be corporate. Humanity, he saw, was, as he expressed it, "a spiritual corporation" made such by its common origin and destiny. The Church thus must be one, religion must be one. An individual religion is as illogical as an individual science.

Thus Catholicism was latent in Heywood Broun's thought, in his individualism, in his love of his fellowman, in his spontaneous sympathy for every cause that seemed to mean the betterment of mankind. Only, left to himself, without a consistent view of the whole, without Catholicity, he rushed headlong, often to make mistakes and feel misgivings. He defended birth control till "he began to realize the spiritual significance of birth," he could be accused of sympathizing with communists, although, as he said, he was too intelligent to be one; but it was only because he aspired to that corporate social justice which can only be attained as men come to realize their universal brotherhood in God. Truly he could say with confidence to Monsignor Sheen, as he put his arm around him with that characteristic warmness of his which endeared him to so many: "Father, I promise you that you will never regret receiving me into the Church."

Heywood Broun's conversion in itself is of deep import as it maps out a path to Rome. Yet, if his evolution is specially striking because of its completion, it is also significant as part of the new turn of thought among the most prominent commentators of the New York press. To find not only Heywood Broun and Walter Lippmann but Boake Carter and Dorothy Thompson writing at times more eloquently along Catholic lines than we Catholics generally do is certainly more than we could expect from what is held to be our chief center of cynicism and sophistication. It is almost unbelievable that a few days ago Carter could write from a metropolis so proud of human achievement and so prone to exalt sensualism: "If a conviction can be founded upon the discovery of the emptiness of world pleasures, then I am convinced. Unless your feet be planted upon a rock, then you may be swept down and down."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But more meaningful still, and indeed as important as the recent trend of Lippmann's writings and Broun's conversion, are the conclusions which Dorothy Thompson so candidly expressed after reading the first encyclical of His Holiness Pope Pius XII.

Miss Thompson and an Encyclical

Dorothy Thompson carefully distinguishes in the Encyclical between the religious and the philosophic content. She expresses her respect for the attitude that we may be happy to believe in order that we may better understand. The fact that such is not necessarily her position only makes the more striking her careful culling out of the Encyclical the philosophical thought which non-believers should be eager to utilize, since only through the recognition of the soundness of this thought can we save our civilization. She testifies that the Pope is fully modern in that he recognizes that we are living in a changing world, but she clearly brings out that the value of his message to the modern world is that he stands for those abiding values which must be everlastingly proclaimed if the changing is not to become a chaos leading to despair. With him she speaks of the heresies of modern society, for she recognizes them to be "not only heresies of the Church, not only heresies against the words of Christ, but heresies against the natural order," not only against revelation, but "against reason and experience as well."

The first is the denial of the basic unity of mankind imposed, as His Holiness expressed it, "by one common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men." The second is the doctrine of the unlimited sovereignty of the state. What a step forward in her admission that "an age which has relegated both religion and philosophy to obscure places and has concerned itself almost wholly with economics and technical progress can no longer afford to scoff, before the plight to which we have come, at the age-old question: Why are we born? For what end do we live?" or to refuse to face the answers of reason and experience, which are corroborated by what she calls "the revealed truth eternally comprehended by the saintly." Therefore she adds: "The words of Pius XII challenge mankind to ask itself for what it lives and works. They call mankind back to the old and eternally new and proper study of mankind: man himself." So in her conclusion she implies what Heywood Broun stated: that "no social philosophy is quite so radical as that of the Church" because it goes to the root of the ever modern question by ever seeking the synthesis between individual freedom and social discipline, between liberty and authority. Thus Heywood Broun and Dorothy Thompson complement each other in their recognition of the superior value for all of what the latter calls: "the great tradition of Catholic intellectuality." Ultimately, that intellectual tradition is the belief in the distinction between God and the universe, and in man as the link between them. On that tradition depend all the values which western civilization came to treasure.

For, as Lippmann put it: "In the recognition that there is in each man an immortal soul which only God can judge, a limit was set upon the dominion of man over man." Or again as he re-expressed it on the anniversary of the Bill of Rights: "The Bill of Rights does not come from the people and is not subject to change by majorities. . . . In the views of the founders, the framework of government and the form of the social order were the things of Caesar; but the rights of men were not Caesar's but the things of God." Ultimately, without God as the source of authority and a divine law which authority must obey, there can be no liberty, because the state's power would be supreme; no democracy founded on common rights; no possible basis of equality because biologically men are not equal; no fraternity or humanity because, to be constituted, humanity must have a common end above time and space. Without God, there can only be, as there has come to be, class and race pride and the rule of the most ruthless. Only on the principle of a God-given nature and a natural law ultimately founded on a divine law will the individual, to use Dorothy Thompson's words, "tame his appetites and discipline his pursuits to the welfare of the community, and the state discipline its power to the welfare of the other states."

A French parallel

Ten years ago such expressions of "Catholic intellectuality" could not be readily found under prominent non-Catholic secular pens. The more interesting is it then to find them now under those of columnists, while academic circles still widely champion that atheistic naturalism which, if fully carried out in practice, would wreck our institutions as it has those of several European countries. It is striking that the same phenomenon could be noted in France some forty years ago. The renaissance of an integral humanism, the rescue of man from mechanistic materialism and all forms of naturalism was carried out in Paris by free-lancers against professors entrenched behind their chairs. But the fact that so many of our prominent professional philosophers are still bogged in their naturalism only makes more significant the fact that American writers, in daily touch with the whole community, have returned to a realization of the necessary distinction between God and humanity, and of humanity's need of a personal God. It can be heralded as the opening of a new epoch in American thought and points

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the way to the contribution which may be made in the United States in the next ten years toward righting the thought of the world.

For what is happening is no less than this: in influential places directly and widely in touch with our people, there is a vigorous repudiation of the philosophies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which bred the heresies now dislocating Europe: the bitter anti-Christianity of Voltaire, the Rousseauistic conception of the state, born of contract, and inimical to corporate groups including all churches; the Hegelian concept of the victorious nation as the highest incarnation of the highest good with the total negation of the rights of weaker groups so sinisterly illustrated today; the pragmatic theory of morality ultimately based on individual advantage; the experimentalist concept that there can be no abiding truth.

What this shift means philosophically is that monistic naturalism is being repudiated in the newspaper office, if not yet in the classroom, in favor of dualistic humanism. Naturalism speaks of "a self-existing and therefore Godless universe, of man emerged from nature by a continuous process." It denies "all supernatural guarantees of human values," defines religion as "actions, purposes and experiences which are humanly significant," and hence considers "the complete realization of the human personality" to be the highest end of man's life. A fundamental source of confusion is that the men who published these principles in a late manifesto*—and they include such prominent educators as Dewey, Barnes, Lovett and Sellers—call themselves humanists, whereas the word *humanism* patently should stand for the distinctly human. They are of course monistic naturalists, since they believe in only one order of existence, nature, with man an integral part of its evolution. Dualistic humanism, on the other hand, recognizes God and the universe, and man distinct in nature because he is composed of body and soul.

In the practical order, the difference between the two schools is that the naturalist, believing in a self-existing universe, cannot believe in an antecedent righteousness or abiding morality. Hence he cannot subscribe to the principles on which the institutions of this nation are founded. For him there can only be a pragmatic ethics born of the needs of the hour in an ever changing world, and he must remain locked-up in the subjectives of his own fancies or desires. He further says that: "the existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate," and that "a socialized and cooperative economic order must be established," which may be true with some distinctions; but as he denies the supernatural, and must therefore look upon the Christian churches as impostors, his social program must inevitably gravitate toward the practices of atheistic communism.

*Reiser, Oliver L., "Humanism and New World Ideals." The Antioch Press, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Monism to dualism

It is then of the utmost importance that our more prominent commentators are definitely turning from this naturalism, which would necessarily give us the slave state as it has done elsewhere, to that dualistic conception of reality and of man which alone can keep us free by safeguarding the distinction between the things of God and the things of Caesar.

It should be clear that Walter Lippmann and Dorothy Thompson have not necessarily evolved further than to this dualistic humanism. It was enough, however, to make them fully grasp anew the importance of the natural law based on the divine law, ultimately the will of God or of the Creator of Whom the founding fathers spoke.

It should be equally clear that this does not mean that they are back to the full range of Catholic wisdom, but it can at least be asserted that they are back to what Dorothy Thompson so discriminatingly calls "Catholic intellectuality."

Moreover their evolution really means much more. For when you have grasped anew that there is an antecedent natural law ultimately divine, then, if you are objective, you cannot help recognizing that, over the centuries during which Europe arose, the great defender of the natural and of the divine law was the Catholic Church. You cannot help recognizing that as the heresies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with their pseudo-liberalism and their secularism, were accelerating our course toward the breakdown of western civilization, the popes of Rome, from Leo XIII to Pius XI, were fearlessly and tirelessly defending the true rights of men on the basis of that eternal law. You cannot help recognizing that the final answer to Hitler and Stalin was given anew to the world, Catholic and non-Catholic, by His Holiness Pius XII.

Comparatively few may, like Heywood Broun, wander back all the way to membership in the body of the Catholic Church. But already there can be no doubt that more and more will come to commune with him in its spirit.

Dark

Now the obedient stars arise,
The crows go home in the crumbling light;
The hills that practiced dark all day
Now make their pact with night.
Fair as was the endless day,
Dark is the first and final thing—
As even when kissing dearest face
The eyes close, practicing.

TOM BOGGS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Radio's Heart-Throbs

What is to be the result of the conquest of radio time by the serials?

By Robert McDonough

WHEN AN obscure Mid-West song-and-chatter duo dreamed up the characters Sam 'n' Henry back in radio's bright Homeric morning, few twiddlers of the primitive cat-whisker of the day realized that then was being sown the germ of what might subsequently become a plague. It was Correll and Gosden, undoubtedly, who gave us the fifteen-minute radio serial, a wireless *genre* which now threatens to crowd all else off the air, not excepting presidential inaugurations.

Of an average Monday a listener anywhere in the United States may hearken to any one or most of the seventy-odd serial "sketches," "plays" or "dramas" which clutter up the kilocycles from eight in the morning until six in the afternoon. And if perchance he has missed his favorite "strip" show during the day, a little searching along the spectrum in the evening will find "Dr. Susan" operating on the little waif by means of electrical transcription; this repeat service seems to be arranged also for those dewy souls who aren't content unless they read "Black Beauty" twice a year.

The 1939 radio serials, save for one or two of a type with the estimable lineal descendant of the pioneer of the species, "Amos 'n' Andy," are quite plainly cut from the tear-jerker, "East Lynne" bolt of flannel; and all are consciously "geared to low-grade mentalities," to quote Robert J. Landry, *Variety's* head radio man. And every recent listener-survey very definitely shows that the listening public, far from complaining, finds the treacle diet a shade better than tolerable.

Why are they so tolerated? Or more important (and to place the horse in his correct position)—what is the explanation for the sudden mushrooming of the fifteen-minute serial drama?

Two methods

In the main there are two sure-fire methods of arresting a sufficient quorum of radio ears to cause your sales-graphs to rise: (*a*) a "name" show featuring a comedian, musician or dramatic artist with an already-won national popularity; (*b*) a huge, "catch-all" schedule of serials. The fact that the second scheme—that involving serials—costs but a fraction of the former per hour should be enough in explanation of why it's being employed more and more as time goes on. (Why should the prudent householder serve the wayfarer caviar when everyone knows that he'll mow the lawn as efficiently on bologna?)

But the advertiser who employs the serial formula must not be considered a tightwad alongside him who still dispenses caviar; oftener than not, they're both spending the same amount of money. However, whereas one lavishes his radio appropriation on talent, the other reserves his for buying vast spreads of time. And there, viewing the question from a broadcasting-business angle, we have the strength and weakness of the radio serial. The serial shows, while they're all over the dial all day long, can have but relatively few sponsors; there isn't room for more. Two present sponsors of large blocks of continuous dramas have, like the Titans that they are, divided the daylight hours among themselves, one taking most of the morning periods and the other contracting for the afternoons. Far from being satisfied with this quasi-monopoly, the agency which has been handling their business is currently agitating for the formation of a fifth national network, which presumably would serve as a sort of serial storm-sewer for the other four.

What crisis?

Still, what's all this talk about "crisis"?—The broadcasting industry is demonstrably booming; and the wheels of many factories are turning a degree faster, all because Stella Barclay and her numerous tribe of sisters and uncles are encountering tear-compelling and apparently endless difficulties in sending their divorce-bereaved children through nursing school or medical college, sandwiched of course between layers of boudoir-type announcing in which listeners are told that a change in their brand of a household necessity will effect a magic alteration in their personalities and domestic relations. "Crisis, it's wonderful," to paraphrase another successful salesman.

The fact is, the picture is far from wonderful; the outlook isn't rosy at all. A revolt against radio serials is spreading, and from an unexpected quarter.

Mr. Edgar A. Grunwald, an extraordinarily acute trade journalist, has just returned from a country-wide tour in the course of which he interviewed over three hundred regional-station execu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tives. His report on the serial question is that most managers see them ruining the initiative of local production staffs, alienating the more intelligent class of listener and making the airing of educational and cultural programs with a regional interest well-nigh impossible. To those few stand-patters who would argue that there is no cause for worry because daytime programs are better than they were six years ago, and, anyway, aren't we making a lot of money? the worriers reply: Sure, but radio's delicate top-soil can be very easily overworked; the time to call a halt is not when a whole crop fails, or after the dust starts rising, but when expert opinion, after an assay of the evidence, announces that it sees disaster ahead, even though "ahead" may not mean next week exactly.

The salvation of American radio from sterility and eventual widespread popular revolt seems to lie in a judicious mixture of locally-originated programs with those from the national production centers. As the evening frames are filled to repletion with national fare of a standard that the listeners have come to expect at that hour (and which the hinterland managers welcome for budgetary and prestige reasons), only the daytime and twilight hours remain for the local production staffs. The fact that hundreds of regional outlets have been forced to cancel from twenty to fifty local features of varying merit to accommodate the network-serial load is an indication of just how lopsided US radio is in danger of becoming.

The station managers are deeply troubled, yes, but what can they do about it? The networks sign them to contracts whereby they may do precious little picking and choosing off the land lines; it's pretty nearly a matter of "all or nothing." And the provincial transmitters, with few exceptions, must have network revenue or die.

One solution that has been suggested is the application of a discriminatory schedule of rates where serials are concerned, thus making it difficult for one advertiser to buy hour after hour of a station's time. Another, which has already been adopted by at least one station, is the institution of a house rule to the effect that no four serials may follow one another, that there must be a fifteen-minute musical break for every forty-five of continuous dramas. A third suggestion, and one which is not likely to be bruited about in broadcasting-industry circles, is based on the supposition that the average serial would either die a quick death or improve beyond recognition if its alleged tawdriness of theme and creakiness of dramaturgical structure were vigorously enough exposed by independent criticism.

It would be ironical if 1940, a year which radio executives have been setting aside for a dread struggle with the television gorilla, should instead find them fighting against drowning in a syrupy, golden sea.

The Poles Remain

By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

THIS MORNING, November 28, 1939, the British public learns through its Press of the generous enterprise of prominent Americans who propose to raise an initial fund of £100,000 for the sending of medical supplies to Europe, on behalf of French and British war-casualties, civilians included. This was announced here and in the United States simultaneously, though no appeal (so far as I know) has been made either by France or by England. Who could be anything but touched and most grateful?

Therefore I register at once my prayer (for who knows how his courage might serve him in the actual hour of pain? for death, I assume, is negligible compared with very great pain or permanent disablement, mental or even bodily) that were I to be gravely wounded in, say, an air-raid, I would be shocked at myself were I to accept help which I knew *could* go to a member of "the beloved nation—I mean, Poland." (I quote the Sovereign Pontiff.)

Lest, in saying this—which I do with a greater conviction of my intelligence and a more passionate stirring of my sympathy, than I have of late said anything—lest, then, in saying this I might appear to exaggerate, I recall that I feared, recently, that I might be incurring much unfriendly criticism when I wrote that while I welcomed the vast sums being raised for our Red Cross, I would do deeper homage to those who should support the Polish Relief Fund. As a matter of fact, I heard none but approving comments. My reasons were arranged in what seemed to me an ascending scale of dignity—the more material being put first and lowest. The very first was that we are sure, in England, to be stirred by compassion for our own men, because we can visualize them, and always do look after them. Not but what we get stirred up about others too, if there is sufficient propaganda to reach our imagination. But at first nobody said much about Poland, and nobody could "imagine" it—I am not at all sure that we did not mix it up with the polar regions and think that the Poles were Eskimos. . . . Anyway, the upshot was that the Red Cross is bound to get large sums in any case.

Next, there is at least the possibility—remote, if you like—that the Red Cross will never need large extra sums: even as it is, whole hospitals have been standing empty for weeks, and again, elaborate equipment has been provided which is not being used, serviceable as it would be even in the interim for ordinary sick cases. Meanwhile, unbelievable horrors are happening in Poland—*are actually happening now.* An American expert has, I am told, calculated that—do what we will—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a million and a half Poles are bound to die this winter of starvation, frost and disease. I return to this below. I repeat, these miseries are happening *now*. And lest anyone should try to gallop off on the excuse that no one can get into either half of vivisected Poland, I could point out that there are hundreds of thousands of refugee Poles in Rumania and Hungary, neither of which countries could even begin properly to cope with their destitution. But we, thank God, can do, as I shall say, what is strictly necessary, and also, see to distribution. The American correspondent alluded to above expressed the prayer that whole tons of glass (I should have said, even talc) could be sent into Poland, where half the windows are shattered and there is nothing even to stop them up with.

These two reasons, then, have appealed to our sense of decency—really neither a man nor a nation must be solely self-regarding. There is order, true, in charity, and the proverb echoes Saint Thomas when it tells us that charity begins at home. But it must not stop there; and even, there is something of the spirit of the old-fashioned "gentleman" in one who prefers to put anyone before himself—and also of pity, to which (as we said) the English are easily stirred once they know of a disaster. The very large Spanish gift recently made to England stirs this sense of chivalry all the more sharply.

And here we interpolate an allusion to a fact that made us at first puzzled and uncomfortable, and then angry and disgusted in very soul. For a while, Poland was hardly mentioned. The press was said to consider that there was "no more story in Poland." But there were more cogent reasons than that, which, since this article altogether eschews politics, we do not allude to. Hence, at first, Polish relief hung fire. After a while, happily, conscience itself began to waken up: the various beneficent enterprises were coordinated: the Polish Relief Fund was properly set going: the King, the Queen, Queen Mary and the Princess Royal gave the first subscriptions; Lord Moyne evacuated his beautiful house for the fund offices: the Government voted a sum: the Ambassador broadcast two appeals: thousands of tons of overcoats, blankets and warm clothing arrived and necessitated taking yet new offices to serve as packing and dispatching center: money was generously given. Her Majesty in a moving radio speech alluded with conviction to Poland and its agonizing women: in every notable address the Poles are coupled with the French as our allies.

Meanwhile, I had two further reasons, actually for thanking God because of Poland and its martyrdom. First, because when any war breaks out nowadays, the Catholic conscience is bound to be anxious, simply because no one anywhere knows everything that lies at the back of any public decision. But now an act of such colossal injustice has been committed—to say nothing of the unparalleled barbarities inflicted upon innocent people, barbarities such that we remember nothing in the last war with which to compare them—that those who are *in* the war have the chance, and the power, and the duty of concentrating on that, and striving for the day of Poland's resurrection, as the Pope says. We say nothing about precise frontiers, nor even about the "corridor" so-called, nor anything which concerns negotiation. But we can heave one sigh of relief amidst our bewilderments and anguish, in that there is one element of indisputable justice on which we can concentrate; one crime, such that we had never thought to see *that* committed, which we are bound by every kind of honor to undo—not but what we recall the immortal phrase of Queen Jadwiga whom we hope to live to see canonized—"You can give them back their cattle; but who will give them back their tears?" And there are tears that may be more bitter even than blood.

Finally, and what settles the matter for every Catholic soul, each of the two great tyrannies is, in its own way, seeking to destroy not only flesh and blood, but souls. By now we are receiving first hand information from refugees. One of my two Polish colleagues on the permanent committee of Eucharistic Congresses has been killed: the other visited me but yesterday, a man changed almost out of recognition since I met him last at Budapest. He recalled that in 1935 a newly consecrated bishop and his coadjutor made their first official visit to Rome. On their return, they told him, half bewildered, that the first thing Pius XI had said to them was: "Are you both prepared to be martyrs?" He foresaw, presumably, what we see. And both, indeed, have been assassinated. Church after church is being pulled down by the Russians: the crucifix expelled from the schools; the teachers replaced whenever possible by members of the Russian anti-God organization. Do any candles remain alight before Our Lady of Czestochowa? Who knows? The Icon itself has, I believe, been buried.

Hence I take delight in carrying around and exhibiting whenever possible its humble reproduction here. Three Sundays ago, on the vigil of Saint Stanislaus Kostka, that picture and his statue and relic were solemnly exposed in Farm Street church. Half the embassy staff was present—had it not been (by a strange chance) Poland's "Day of Independence," the ambassador would have been there himself; as it was, he had to go to our London Polish church. All those two days (the Sunday and the feast), the brilliantly lighted shrine was filled with worshippers; and the little picture of Our Lady, Queen of Poland, of which we have had scores of thousands printed, is finding its way all over England

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and causing myriads of prayers to rise towards God through her intercession.

I trust that it is overwhelmingly clear that I have in no remotest way approached the question of America's participation in the fighting of this war with arms. But no one will protest—especially since the manifesto gallantly issued by your hierarchy—against my registering my conviction that any man in any country who fails to recognize the appalling injustice done to Poland is, by now, sinning against the light: and that any Catholic who can remain unconcerned about the fate of the Church in that land whose fidelity to the Faith and whose services to Christian culture are indelibly, says Pius XII, engraved upon the tablets of history, has a responsibility before both God and man which Heaven forbid that I should ever —even by silence—become guilty of sharing.

Ireland and England

By ROGER SHAW

THEY ALWAYS used to say that England's extremity was Ireland's opportunity. There were considerable grounds for this statement. Irish sympathy for the Spanish Armada was marked. An Irish Brigade cracked the English at Fontenoy. The Irish rose to help the French revolutionaries in 1798 and to aid the German warlords in 1916. After the World War, certain Irish radical groups unquestionably had Russian affiliations.

But not so today. I recently returned from the "new" Irish Free State. There I discovered that, history notwithstanding, Irish public sentiment was surprisingly pro-English — within marked limits. The limits were those of neutrality, but it inclined to be a "benevolent" neutrality. Somebody over there cracked an old joke: "We're neutral, as between the allies." Frankly, knowing something of Irish background, it seemed peculiar.

Only twenty years ago, or less, Irish patriots were locked in a hideous sort of guerrilla death-struggle with English regulars and with those famous English irregulars, the Black and Tans. The story of the Black and Tans need not be told here. They were recruited from English jails and from the toughest elements of the English army demobilized after four years in France and Belgium. They burned Cork—second city of the Free State—in a drunken moment, and pulled out Irish fingernails with pincers. These details I had first-hand, from a Black and Tan veteran who liked to talk freely. Today he pulls bell-chimes in a church steeple, and played for me the "Star Spangled Banner," by means of an octave of eight ropes.

There has been a tendency, of late years, even among Irish-Americans, to play down or belittle English atrocities in Ireland. Everybody has become weary of listening to Irish wrongs and sorrows. But, boring or not, most of the horror tales were true, and amply documented, from the time of Cromwell to that of Sir Philip Gibbs. In this connection, it must perforce be added, Winston Churchill's record is not exactly above reproach. None the less, since the advent of Hitler, England's extremity—if it really be an extremity—is in no sense Ireland's opportunity, and very few in Eire regard it as such.

For one thing the Irish like sports, and consider that the English are good sportsmen. Both antithetic races like horses, football and hockey. Neither race is particularly fond of the more rigorous and abstemious Scotch. Both have a streak of mysticism which the Scotch totally lack.

Again, the Irish, after centuries of experience with it, have an almost exaggerated regard for English imperialism and for the English navy. This, be it added, is not an affectionate regard, but it is a regard none the less. "England can't lose; she never does," said my hotel bellboy, who was none too anglophile. "Politics aside, the Limies are pretty daycent people," added a policeman who was listening in. "I fought for them in the last war, and against them after it," he added.

In an Irish movie theatre I heard the two little English princesses applauded to the last echo as they appeared in a newsreel, though it must be added that their august parents, who came on ahead of them, did not get a single handclap. Perhaps, in this case, it was applause for a pair of cute little girls packed with pre-sex appeal and had nothing political about it. I merely report facts.

I rode for seven hours by bus with a double-squad of Irish Civic Guards—state troopers, we should call them—from Cork to Dublin Castle, where they were being mustered in force. I talked to them all the way up—that is, when they were not chattering in Gaelic among themselves. None of them were especially pro-English, far from it, for they were strong De Valera men. But most of them seemed to think that Hitler had to be beaten—"a crazy monn," one declared as he poured down a big beer at a wayside pub.

They told me that perhaps a third of the Royal Air Force was Irish, and that His Majesty's army and navy still had full recruiting privileges in the Free State. I deplored this, but nobody seemed very indignant about it. One could see Irish reservists en route to the English colors here and there—flyers, doughboys, gobs—and they evoked no hostility, although the Free State army itself is in need of recruits these days, and one sees Free State recruiting posters up everywhere. Of course pay and pensions are better in the English army, and probably food and lodging as well. England has more money than De Valera. Incidentally, the English unemployment dole is higher too, by several shillings.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of course the Anglo-Irish ex-aristocrats were almost rantingly anglophile, but they are few and far between, and nobody pays much attention to them. They are more royal than the King, more English than the English. But, and more to the point, the native Irish upper classes, too, were rationally pro-English in the war and told me with pride that Egypt and Iraq had thrown their overwhelming strength to the Allied side. They were worried about what South Africa would do—it might stay out!—but as for Ireland herself, these sturdy gentlefolk demanded neutrality, as indeed did everybody else I spoke with.

There were a good many English women and children coming over to the Free State, to get away from air-raid precautions and nervous wear and tear. Most of their men had been called up, and they were a miserable crew, many with limited means. To these refugees the Irish were unfailingly kind, and as far as I could see, there was little or no profiteering. The Irish heart proved itself bigger than the Irish pocketbook. Also, one could spot without too much trouble a motley array of English draft-dodgers: communists, Hindoos, "tourists," decent young fellows with nerves. To them, too, the Irish were friendly. "Who can blame them?" said a friend to me. "After all, we had plenty of them like that, from over the other side, in the last war." The trouble is that many of these peace-minded lads have little money, and jobs are scarce in Eire.

By and large, the Irish West was more hostile to England than the Irish East, and the country districts were more hostile than the cities. Around Killarney I heard shouts of "Up Hitler" and saw signs inimical to John Bull. The small minority of the IRA—the Irish Republican Army—is bomb-minded and anglophobe, and so are interesting little sheets like the "Wolfe Tone Weekly" and a newspaper or two. Most of the established Irish press, like the *Irish Times* and the *Cork Examiner*, for example, are friendly to England—the *Irish Times*, in fact, perhaps too much so in the light of neutrality. The private sentiments of the Irish newspaper men with whom I talked seemed divided. More divided than those of the man in the street. So, too, the Irish intellectuals with whom I chatted. In such circles many doubts about England were freely expressed, and the cult of Gaelic seemed pronounced. I dared to suggest that our own Washington and Jefferson should have pushed the study of Mohawk after 1776. They laughed me down. "Don't forget," said one, "that the Mohawks took the English side in your revolution." He won the debate.

In the six counties of Ulster, two-thirds Protestant and still a part of England, the majority, of course, were feverishly loyal. The Catholic minority I understood to be disaffected, and eager for union with the Free State. A few Irish hotheads deemed the war to be a good time for annexation of Ulster by the Free State. This, however, was largely a "crank" opinion, for most Irishmen are less anxious even to fight the English than the Germans. De Valera, I understand on the best authority, is platonically pro-ally, and unquestionably he seeks to curb the IRA extremists. The Catholic Church is peaceably inclined.

One heard yarns of German submarine-tenders hidden in the coastal recesses of the Irish West, where the peasants might prove friendly. If such tenders exist, the majority of Irishmen would be the first to deplore them—if there are any such. The statue of Lord Nelson still towers over Dublin, though Nelson never did any service to the Emerald Isle . . . except beat its friends, the French. English money still freely circulates, though the Irish cash equivalents are prettier (one Irish note carries the head of the world's most beautiful woman). English automobiles, like the little M.G., are popular; and so are English troupes like that of "White Horse Inn," which fairly panicked Cork for two weeks. Sir George Colthurst, Anglo-Irish yet well liked, continues to own Blarney Castle, to which he charges a shilling per visit.

Ireland continues to operate its Derby, its Grand Prix, its *Times*, its Bank of Ireland and Church of Ireland, its duodecimal currency, its pink coats, in the English way and with the support of Irish public opinion. Many citizens have Gaelicized their names, it is true, but many have not. The English record in Ireland is bad, and all Irishmen know it and remember it. But they let bygones be bygones. Now they enjoy that virtual independence for which the Emmets and Tones and Casements died. England, in this war, will not be stabbed in the back.

To Jesus: A Salutation Before an Offering

They gathered all the flowers,
Poured the last residue of perfume,
Lighted all the candles,
And filled the shrine with magnificent music,
When they made their offerings.

So, I have folded the few petals
Of my heart into one white flower,
Gathered my soul
Into one fragrance,
Lighted the little taper of my lamp,
And filled my flute with the gold
Of my voice.
These, my Lord, are the treasures in my humble basket of offerings.
O, let me enter into the temple
And bend my head in reverent salutation,
Before I lay my basket at the foot of the altar.

GUILLERMO V. SISON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON'S recent articles in the London *Tablet* on "European Unity and the League of Nations" are very useful contributions to the literature which is intended to aid the efforts being made by a small number of people in all countries who are trying to come to grips with the really fundamental problems which have been revealed, but are far from being understood, in the glaring light of the wars now spreading throughout the world. Like many other writers taking part in this work, Mr. Dawson looks forward, with as much hope as he can muster, to the world after the ending of the war that must undertake the gigantic work of reconstruction. Like most of his fellow publicists, he perceives the need there will be for rulers and leaders of the nations, and their state governments, reaching some common ground of agreement on a wider, and deeper, basis than has hitherto been known. It is not at all likely that what Mr. Dawson is thinking and writing will be pondered by the present heads of the warring and neutral governments. These latter are all so keenly preoccupied by the pressing immediate problems of their predicament as to be unable, when not unwilling, to devote much serious attention to post-war problems. Nevertheless, even Mr. Chamberlain, on behalf of Great Britain, and M. Daladier, on behalf of France, have referred, more or less vaguely, yet very significantly, to ideas of international federation. Russia and Germany have more definite, clear cut ideas; the first, of a federation of world-wide Soviet governments, taking their pattern, if not their direct line, from Moscow; the second, of a federation of world empires ruled by a hierarchy of "master peoples," of which, of course, the Germans must necessarily be the leaders. The only point at which the ideas of the present heads of the governments involved in the European wars are in any sort of agreement is, therefore, in believing that in some way or other the epoch of separate, independent national "sovereignties" is definitely over. This point is one that must also concern the nations and states so far not involved in the actual hostilities.

Mr. Dawson is a Catholic, and his many books and other writings show how profoundly he is convinced that the neglect of and indifference toward religious principles —when it was not actual hostility toward them—on the part of most modern state governments have contributed toward the break-down of peace and the threatened break-down of civilization itself that now confronts the whole world. Yet Mr. Dawson does not indulge in the far too complacent assumption adopted by some Catholic writers to the general effect that only Catholics are competent to supply the answer to the problems now before the world. He is aware how inadequately many Catholic writers and Catholic groups are equipped to deal with these matters, because they themselves are so divided in their opinions on specific, if not general, ideas and so uncertain as to how best the traditional ideas of past centuries may be applied to modern conditions without sacrifice of their innate truth, yet equally without sacrifice of the interests of the living generations of today and of the morrows that must dawn beyond the present wars. For example Mr. Dawson states that "the clearest statement that I know of Catholic international principles—the Code of International Ethics prepared by the International Union of Social Studies—while dealing exhaustively with the rights and duties of states, gives superficial attention to the fundamental sociological problem of the *nature* of the state." Space is lacking here to give the detailed study of the great importance of understanding the vital distinction Mr. Dawson finds to exist between the conception of state, as held by modern democratic thinkers and idealists, and that of the nation; all I can do here is to refer interested students to Mr. Dawson's own words in the *Tablet* (December 23, 1939) and his other essays and books. It seems to me a matter of capital importance. The practical error that corrupted and weakened even the most honest and sincere efforts of the League of Nations was probably the inherent error of considering states as being identical with nations, so that, in practice as well as theory, the impossible attempt was made by the League to consider that such states as Haiti or Panama or Abyssinia not only had equal rights and duties in international affairs as such states as Germany or Great Britain or France or the United States—if the latter had been a member of the League—but had equality in culture and political power as well—or should be considered as having such equality and power. It was a false, secular mysticism, bemusing some of the best and most humanitarian, but not the best-thinking, minds of the age that is now dying on the battlefields.

Probably not only the confusion between the ideas of state and nation, but also the dangerous idolatry of an idea even more widely accepted, that of absolute national sovereignty, must be resolutely examined and sanely dealt with by those thinkers who are trying to clear the paths of reconstruction. When we find the head of a modern nation, who also is head of the state government of that nation, now subordinate to the German state, I mean Slovakia, who himself is not only a Catholic, but a Catholic priest, considering it his state and national duty to follow Hitler in tying the policy of his people up with that of the Nazis and the Communists, no matter what the Nazis and the Communists think or say or do about the Catholic religion, surely the relationship between politics and religion calls for some clarification. The Germans who were annexed in the Tyrol region to Italy after the last war were Catholics. The treatment they received from Catholic Italy since then was such that now they have overwhelmingly voted to go back to Germany, in spite of the Nazi attitude toward the Church. Scores of other proofs might be cited of the sad fact that political and racial and national considerations have outweighed the abstract principles of religion throughout many parts of the world and will continue to do so in the future unless or until religious principles are so clearly defined and taught in their practical relation to political affairs, that they may escape from the vague region of glittering generalities. Perhaps our Catholic universities may take the lead in studying this neglected subject.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communications

WPA WORKER STRIKES BACK

TO the Editors: Permit me to compliment you upon your fairness in printing Allen's article (January 12) about the WPA. It is about time that something was done about the country's attitude in respect to the status of the WPA worker. As it is now, there is a new class, for the want of a better term, made up of WPA workers who are neither unemployed or employed in gainful occupations, and are looked upon by business men in many cases as one would look upon a poor and not so welcome relative. The average WPA employee I have met, and I have met many, is conscious of this and the result has been that many who have been forced through no fault of their own to work on WPA, are ashamed of it and try to conceal the disgrace before their more fortunate brethren. There are some business men, unfortunately, who still hold to the old Puritanical philosophy of the glorification of work and refuse to employ men and women who have been employed upon WPA. To me this shows a shallowness of thinking on the business man's part, as he, if I am to believe our press, resents governmental intervention in the question of employment and yet refuses to assist in removing men and women from WPA by employing them. This might not be so general among unskilled labor groups, but I do know that it is true among "white collar" workers!

This condition, as is obvious, is decidedly unhealthy for the welfare of our country. No country can set off a group of people and *tolerate* them rather than *live* with them and expect to have a healthy peaceful social body. The WPA worker is not an alien or a poor relative, but an American and often as not a Christian who by circumstances beyond his control is forced to engage in an occupation that is not particularly to his liking. The great majority of WPA workers are not likely interested in making a career out of their jobs. Some are, that is true. But will the critics of the WPA worker force those who are ambitious, honest and as good as any other person employed in private industry to grovel for a living and a position?

WILLIAM R. TURNER.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The article "WPA Worker Strikes Back" by Leonard A. Allen is indeed as you called it "a human document." It aroused my sympathy as it should that of every person who has a sense of what human dignity means.

It is unfortunate that with all of our scientific and technological experience we have not learned how to take care of our most valuable asset, the working human beings. What the value is of lost skills can never be measured in money. It is deplorable, however, to read in Allen's article, next to the last paragraph, his bitter comparison between the plight of men like himself and that of the Jews in Germany. The WPA worker with all of his troubles in this country is still a free man and still has a modicum of dignity left. Above all, he still has the right and the privilege to express himself as Allen has done in THE COMMONWEAL.

The Jews in Germany have been driven from their homes, robbed of their property, separated from their families, herded in cattle cars, sent to freeze and to do forced labor and placed beyond the pale of any protective laws. There has been no limit to the barbarity to which these people have been subjected, all without any fault of theirs except that they were born of Jewish parents. No WPA worker has been placed in such a sad plight.

It is a pity that any worker's sufferings are so acute that he will lose his sense of proportion and feel that his hope is so far gone as to compare himself to the agonized martyrs of Germany.

JACOB MARK.

JUST WAR

TO the Editors: The letter of Mr. William J. Meter in your January 12 issue, among the group of letters devoted to praise and criticism of M. Maritain's attitude on the present European war, was particularly welcome. It is the first expression I have encountered in your columns of a viewpoint somewhat favorable to the German position. That this viewpoint exists in this country can be taken for granted, and it is necessary that it be made vocal and have its day in court.

Mr. Meter's statement is a temperate and reasoned one, but it appears to me that his attempt to argue a case for Germany, in the present condition and on the basis of the acknowledged errors of the Versailles Treaty, indicates a lack of a sense of proportion. It has become customary to place all of the blame for Germany's condition in the period following the World War at the doors of the Allies, as due to the conditions imposed at Versailles.

To accept this idea one must ignore the real basis of Germany's ills, which resulted from a disastrous and impoverishing war, in which, to state it in the mildest of terms, she was a most willing combatant. That her recovery was delayed by the conditions imposed on her by the Allies we will grant. In the light of present events we know these conditions to have been penalizing to a degree that was unfair to a grievously misled people. That these conditions were a vindictive response to arrogant and unwarranted assumptions of superiority and of rights based on these assumptions does not excuse the lack of wisdom of Clemenceau and his associates.

Granting all this, does Mr. Meter still find that the Hitler government is warranted in following the course it has in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland? Is Germany righting her legitimate wrongs in these cases, or are we not again confronted with the "assumption of superiority" and of fabulous rights supposed to accrue to superior races, which gives them the privilege of conquest and spoilation?

Mr. Meter states, "The only claim it [the war] can make for justice lies in opposition to Nazism." Personally I agree with him in this sense: as the course followed, that of conquest and spoilation, is the Nazi ideology projected into action, what really is being resisted is the ideology. In the foreign activities of the Hitler govern-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment there is every evidence, both in word and deed, of a close identity of ideology and action, and these are marked with the diabolism which is a predominant Nazi characteristic. We are familiar with all phases of this as it has been applied to the internal life of Germany. Now that there is a terrorizing effort under way to project it into foreign areas, resistance to it, no matter how mixed the motives which inspire that resistance, must be said to serve a good end.

BARRY BYRNE.

Woodside, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Must one be a person "of world wide fame," a professor and a lecturer, an author of many books and a writer of magazine articles before he may consider himself competent to pass judgment on a contemporary social or political problem?

By what standards is one to know that he has the competence to understand what another has written?

Mr. W. O'Meara's letter in your January 12 issue leads me to pose these questions.

At the moment, I do not wish to discuss the soundness of Mr. John Kelly's criticism of M. Maritain in his article "Reply to Jacques Maritain"; but I stoutly maintain his right to make known his own judgment in the matter.

I was taught in school not slavishly to accept the reasoned opinions of my masters, but to draw my own conclusions through my own rational powers. Is it possible that now students are being taught to make judgments on authority only?

I say, more power to Mr. Kelly—and please give us more articles like his and Maritain's. Only full discussion of all points of view renders it possible to judge rightly of complex situations such as the present war.

PATRICK J. WHELAN.

SOS FROM THE DROUGHT AREA

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: In THE COMMONWEAL of November 17, 1939, Catherine Bradshaw in an article entitled "SOS from the Drought Area" makes the following statements: ". . . at present $5 will buy an acre of Dakota land in any part of the state." "We say now, and it is quite true, that one can always tell the state-owned farms: they are the only ones painted and in good repair." "It is strange that people living in rural districts always feel that the members of a town community never suffer financial reverses, never work outside of writing an occasional business letter, and never worry beyond wondering if a sudden shower will ruin a new hat."

In her article the author refers to the Dakotas and Nebraska, but she does not make it clear to which of the Dakotas the above quotations refer.

The writer of this letter states explicitly that such quotations as the above give a false impression of South Dakota. There is land today in South Dakota which cannot be bought for $70.00 per acre. There are many sets of buildings, not state-owned, which are painted and in good repair. There are many communities in South Dakota where farmers understand the problems of the townspeople—and the townspeople, the problems of the farmers—in which there is excellent community spirit and cooperative endeavor.

Fairness to South Dakota and to the other states indicated should demand investigation and an honest presentation of the facts.

JAMES A. FITZGERALD.

CATHOLICS IN FINLAND

O'Fallon, Mo.

TO the Editors: I have read with satisfaction the illuminating article "Catholics in Finland" by the Right Reverend L. G. Ligutti (January 12). The Monsignor certainly had his eyes and ears open during his visit to the beautiful land of the "thousand lakes." I am only sorry that I did not have the pleasure of meeting him when both of us were there during the summer of 1939.

Permit me to comment on one of the remarks in the interesting account. "Four Precious Blood Sisters from O'Fallon, Missouri, had recently arrived to open a mission in Helsinki. They left Finland before hostilities began." On September 30 these four Sisters declared before their spiritual adviser: "We have come to Finland to give all we are and have to Christ's apostolate. With God's help we are going to stay, work and die here, come what may." When two weeks later they were urged to leave the country, they reluctantly departed for Holland. And so it is true that "they left Finland before hostilities began." However on the feast of the Presentation of Mary they prepared to return to Helsinki and are now taking care of about 100 poor children somewhere in the land of the "blue cross on the white background."

In his Christmas sermon his Excellency the Archbishop of Saint Louis held up these heroic souls to an age lacking in the spirit of sacrifice, an age quite ready to run away over the Appian Way of cowardice in the face of difficulties. "The Sisters concluded," said his Excellency, "that as to Helsingfors they were sent, their mission was there and therefore they would go there. Shortly after Finland was attacked by Russia, news came that somewhere in or around the fated city these nuns are ministering to the children of soldiers who are battling against fearful odds to save their country. The last chapter in this saga that binds Saint Louis with embattled Finland has not yet been told. It may be their lives will end in a red blotch on the white snows of Finland. It may be even a sadder fate will befall them if they fall into the hands of the conquering barbarians, or it may be that in the goodness of God they will be left to serve for many years to teach the children in a Finland that still lives as a free nation."

May I recommend these four heroic Sisters and their work to the prayers of the readers of THE COMMONWEAL? And if, during the fast approaching Lent, one or the other reader would want to smoke a cigar less for the benefit of these Sisters and the poor children they are caring for, the lenten saving will be gratefully accepted and joyfully forwarded to them by

REV. MARTIN B. HELLRIEGEL,
Spiritual Director of the Sisters of the Precious Blood

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Stage & Screen

Who Ride on White Horses

THE MIMES AND MUMMERS of Fordham University is to be congratulated on the skill with which it produced this play by Richard Breen and Harry Schnibbe. "Who Ride on White Horses" is concerned with the life and martyrdom of Blessed Edmund Campion, and it is written with much sensitiveness. Indeed the dialogue in its bite and turn of phrase displays a sense of the theatre rare in plays by amateurs. Probably some of this is due to the supervision of the script by Emmet Lavery, but it is certain that Mr. Breen and Mr. Schnibbe have a sense of dramatic effect in their own right. Their play takes Campion from the days when he was an Anglican through his conversion and his joining the Society of Jesus to his death. Robert Speaight, who appeared two years ago as Becket in "Murder in the Cathedral," was the guest artist, and played Campion with dignity and feeling. Miss Mary Schneider did an admirable job as Queen Elizabeth, and George McGovern as Brother Ralph proved that a college undergraduate can yet be an artist fully able to hold his own with a professional. The students who played the other parts acquitted themselves exceedingly well, with a special word of praise for their playing in the scene on the steps of Dublin Cathedral. Praise too must go to Albert McCleery for his direction and to the unnamed person or persons who did the scenery. *(At the Heckscher Theatre.)*

The Male Animal

AFTER a couple of unfortunate weeks the Broadway theatre has another success. Everyone knows James Thurber's goofy drawings in the *New Yorker,* and when Mr. Thurber sets out to write a play we might expect something equally goofy. That "The Male Animal" is not that is probably due to Mr. Thurber's collaborator, Elliott Nugent, who knows the limitations of the theatre. At all events between them they have produced an amusing play about a mid-Western college, which is run, not by its faculty but by a board of old grads who think that football is the chief reason for a college's existence. Now of course a bitter and meaningful play might have been written round this idea, but Mr. Thurber and Mr. Nugent are content to write a merely amusing one. Yet there are moments when real satire thrusts up its head, and the audience certainly is made to sympathize with the young English professor who believes that college students should at least learn how to write. In his character and in the one of the senior professor there are indeed the makings of a serious comedy. The cast is admirable. Mr. Nugent plays the young professor with skill and feeling, and Ruth Matteson, his wife, with rare sensitiveness, variety and technical virtuosity. A really gorgeous performance is given by Leon Ames as the ex-all American half-back, as innately dumb as he is masculine and well-meaning. Ivan Simpson makes us wish that the part of the senior English professor were a longer one, and Matt Briggs and Amanda Randolph are also worthy of special note. In short "The Male Animal" is, despite its slow opening, an exhilarating farce-comedy, with three or four figures who are more than mere theatrical puppets. Herman Shumlin is to be congratulated on his first comedy success. *(At the Cort Theatre.)* GRENVILLE VERNON.

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

ROBERT MONTGOMERY proves in *"The Earl of Chicago"* that his brilliant performance in "Night Must Fall" was not just an accident. No Hollywood playboy romps through this unusual story of a Chicago gangster, a not-too-smart big shot, who becomes an English lord and learns in the hard way about tradition, noblesse oblige, entailed estates, and "priceless heirlooms" that really have no price. Richard Thorpe has not relaxed and directed just another gangster-to-gentleman comedy. The picture has humor and sentiment, but its subtle undertones of tragedy, of a life wasted and ruined by circumstances and environment, becomes the main theme. Montgomery's consistent, convincing characterization of "Silky," who is no ordinary gangster of the movie variety, as is seen in his phobia against guns, never goes soft. Excellent acting support comes from Edmund Gwenn, the butler who explains the way of English nobility, and from Edward Arnold, the "honest" lawyer who, once framed by "Silky," gets even in the "honest" way. Three scenes stand out in this extraordinary film: "Silky's" accession to Parliament, his trial for murder before his peers when he mumbles in a stream-of-consciousness fashion and his walk to the gallows.

In comparison, the rest of the week offers slim pickings. A good cast of personable young men (Douglas Fairbanks, jr., John Howard, Vincent Price, Alan Hale, George Sanders, George Bancroft) are wasted when they do some pretty awful "Rover Boys in the Jungle" stuff in *"Green Hell."* This is not to be confused with last year's beautifully photographed, German picture of the same name or Julian Duguid's book. The boys go into the Brazilian interior to hunt up buried Inca treasure which they locate along with the usual, overworked jungle night noises, hungry alligators and natives with poisonous darts. The commonplace story takes a romantic turn when Joan Bennett, with highly manicured finger nails and trunksful of lovely, starched dresses, shows up to cause dissension in their jungle camp. Just as you expect, when natives swoop down on our friends, young Doug says, "We must not be captured alive."

"A Child Is Born," with an absence of good taste and privacy, takes you right into the maternity ward where some strange bed-fellows are collected: the mother who is a yearly patient, a murderess who will return to penitentiary after her child is born, an actress who resents this intrusion on her work, a bride who ran away from her parents, a woman whose baby just died, a crazy woman who thinks she just had a child. Mix them all up and they hardly spell anyone's idea of mother. Director Lloyd Bacon didn't even bother to build up legitimate suspense for this slow and phony story. I don't know for whom the picture was made; certainly not for children, hysterical women or expectant fathers. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Riches in a Big Room

By HARRY LORIN BINSSE

THESE eight volumes * are the result of fifteen years' work not only by the principal collaborators whose names appear below, but also by groups of graduate students, paid assistants and friendly scholars in England and America. They represent the final completion of a project monumental in scope and execution. Establishing the correct text of any work of literature has its difficulties. At the very outset one is confronted with the possibility that the author himself may have made revisions of his own work, so that variations are possible which may each be "genuine" in the sense that each is the way the author wrote, soon or late. Add to that primary source of variants the infinite hazards to which the textual purity of a given work is subject, particularly if the work dates back to the days before printing, when each copying inevitably added its peculiar mistakes—or editorial emendations, for the copyists of yesteryear, like the editors of today, were not above thinking that they could on occasion improve what a mere author had written.

Chaucer offers his own rather special textual problems. His works exist in a rather large number of manuscripts which vary considerably from each other and are obviously of differing quality. The texts so far published, the best to date being that of Skeat, could not possibly be based upon all the extant mss., if only because until the development of the photostat and manuscript-photograph it would have been physically impossible to assemble the material necessary for such a task. It is precisely this that Mr. Manly and Miss Rickert undertook to do. Through the generosity of mss. owners, public and private, and with the help of a large subsidy from the Rockefeller Foundation, they set to work to gather together at the University of Chicago photostats or photographs of every known extant Chaucer manuscript. With this as a basic source and with years spent working abroad on the mss. themselves, they have produced not only a text which will probably not be superseded in any important respect, but they have produced a critical apparatus to go with that text which is one of the finest specimens of American scholarship to date.

Apart from the text itself, you may ask, what is the justification for such Herculean tasks? Why not establish the text and call it a day, letting the apparatus rest where it properly belongs, safely out of sight? It is perfectly true that there seems to be a little disproportion in publishing an apparatus, and not a critical or explanatory apparatus at that, which is fully seven times the length of the text it concerns. One cannot help a suspicion that there is something a bit Alexandrian about it. Yet from the point of view of pure scholarship, all this serves some purpose. At least we have here an exhaustive guide book to the eighty-odd mss. of Chaucer. To anyone who wishes to do research in England's greatest poet before Shakespeare, Manly-Rickert will be a *sine qua non*. Perhaps the publishers, realizing how little use all this labor will be to the ordinary reader, who would like to know Chaucer for the sake of his poetry and not for the sake of the differences between one mss. reading and another, will now perform a very useful service indeed by publishing the text of the tales as poetry in large, legible type (the inexpensive Skeat is awful to read) with a minimum of footnotes and a good glossary (again Skeat leaves much to be desired).

I have never had much patience with the many attempts that have been made to "modernize" Chaucer. It takes precious little perspiration to get so that you can read him "in the original," and every modernization I have ever seen is either quaint or else dull—and Chaucer is certainly neither. For after all the chief beauty of poetry lies in its form. Excellence of content is a necessary thing, but excellent content can be presented in a very poor suit of clothes. It is the clothing—sewing, cloth, cut, and all—that makes *poetry*, distinguishes it from verse or prose. It is, if you like, the form which gives character to the content. At best, therefore, translations of poems are mere shadows of the original, or else they represent the impact of a great poem upon the mind of another poet, in which case they may be fine poetry, but are they Homer? How doubly fruitless, then, to "translate" an author whose language is so close to our own that any person who really puts his mind to it can read and understand what the poet himself wrote. No, I am emphatically of the Chaucer-straight school.

There is one very good thing about the "Text of the Canterbury Tales." No one who sees such a vast undertaking carried to completion can fail to realize the importance of the object of so much scholarly solicitude. One may not know why Chaucer is important, but he must be important if his writings deserve all that attention. No one would think of doing the same thing for the works of Gower—or if he did think of it, he would get very little encouragement from others (though you never can be sure of any limit to the absurdity of PhD. theses). Now I honestly believe that it is a very good thing for people to be impressed with the importance of Chaucer. He is, of course, incomparably the greatest English Catholic poet, and I think one could put up a very jolly argument for ranking him with Shakespeare and Milton as one of the premier three of all English writers of verse, naturally with Shakespeare winning the race by a length. But in one thing—a very Christian and Catholic thing—Chaucer is supreme. I suppose that I would be very bold indeed if I were to call that thing "democracy." But I think that it is the quality which a great many people mean to signify when they use the horrid word. Of course I don't mean that G. Chaucer was a precursor of T. Jefferson or (save the mark!) of J. Rousseau. I don't mean anything political at all. I mean merely that he loved people—all kinds of people, and for the sake of their humanity, not their pretensions or their accidental qualities. His rogues are all lovable rogues, and you feel he respects them as persons with souls to save just as much—and as little—as he respects his lady prioress or his knight or his clerk of

* The Text of the Canterbury Tales. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert. University of Chicago. $40.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford. There is not, if you like to put it that way, a snobbish line in all he wrote.

There may be some literal-minded readers who will point to the Hugh of Lincoln tale as a fine specimen of anti-Semitism calculated to bring joy to the heart of a Hitler. There I cannot entirely agree. For one thing, notice that the tale is assigned to the prioress, who is the very incarnation of sentimentality. She weeps at seeing a mouse caught in a trap; she feeds her dogs on delicacies fit for a king's table, she is a devotee of love and is terribly, terribly genteel. Above all she is a simple soul who would certainly take wooden nickels or buy the Brooklyn Bridge. An excellent subject for propaganda. With beautiful appropriateness Chaucer has her tell a propaganda story that, when you stop to think of it, is a dead ringer for some of the things dished out by the British in the last war and dished out to the Germans since the rise of National Socialism. But even here, notice that the emphasis is on the little boy's love of Our Lady, on his pure religious devotion, and the "cursed Jews" are inspired to their act by Satan, not by their own malevolence. Satan is the real villain, acting through his chosen instrument. That kind of anti-Semitism was strong in the Middle Ages and sadly led to some horrible persecutions. I have often wondered whether Chaucer was not, perhaps even unconsciously, placing it in its proper frame of reference by making the prioress its exponent. She is certainly the living type of those who still make up a good-sized division in the army of the racially intolerant.

Apart from that one specimen of bigotry—if it really is that—I can think of no exception to Chaucer's all-pervading attitude of respect for the human person. And that is an attitude of incalculable value to our world, which so conspicuously lacks it. One could fill columns discussing this gentle poet, for one thought about him easily leads to a hundred others. That, space prevents. But for having prompted the thoughts at all we must be grateful to Mr. Manly and to the late Miss Rickert and to their patient collaborators. If I were a Catholic (or non-Catholic!) librarian, I'd translate that gratitude into an order.

More Books of the Week

Shop Talk

A Smattering of Ignorance. Oscar Levant. Doubleday. $2.00.

A READER will more likely than not know if he enjoys the effects of this book before he bothers to buy it, since the author is the same Mr. Levant who publicly competes with the American radio public, the publishers of the Encyclopedia Britannica and Canada Dry's cash register every other Tuesday night on the country's premier quiz, "Information Please." The chances are very good that public preference will be reinforced and that Mr. Levant's contract will be renewed when this volume of memoires and belles lettres has begun to circulate. It is most entertaining reading to be sure.

"A Smattering of Ignorance (One of the most robust of modern wits puts music in its place)" is excellent and interesting shop talk. The trades or professions—or arts—the reader is taken inside of are principally two: music and witty society. Levant has an odd angle on both, "a something new and completely 'underivative' in his humor and point of view," S. N. Behrman says in the introduction. The viewpoint may be new to most of us principally because we are not musicians and because we are not members of the well formed society made up of many persons in the upper classes of the artistic, journalistic, literary and entertainment world. Mr. Levant is a most productive member of those two groups, but still looks at them with rather devastating detachment. Also, he is humble, writing as though he himself did not feel securely in the swim and did not have any high ideas about his own musical work, whose quality, besides, is by no means slight.

From this comes the "integrity" the introduction and the reviews repeatedly speak about. The integrity is so obviously dramatized and sentimentalized by the author's famous bad manners and bitter tongue, that for the interested reader the integrity itself might seem at first fake.

It is impossible not to quote something in a review of this most quotable book (you had better read it quickly if you want to preempt stories from it for your salon conversation). My quotation might as well illustrate the quasi-Man Who Came to Dinner acidulousness: "At this gathering were two remarkably unpleasant young men, truly possessed of a talent for inimicality [there are many odd words in the book, by courtesy of both the author and the proofreader]—Jerome Moross and Bernard Herrmann. They were present to cast evil spells and mutter curses on everything that was heard at Yaddo, possibly because no work of theirs had been included. . . ." This, of course, serves as an introduction to men who became particularly good friends of Levant, who quickly entered what Mr. Behrman describes as "the spiked embrace of his friendship."

Oscar Levant gives music and musicians little swank of the ordinary toney variety. Toscanini himself suffers unbecoming, if by no means degrading, exposure. The most successful essay of the book is undoubtedly: "My Life: Or the Story of George Gershwin," but the first part, "Music in Aspic," shows better the book's unusual quality. It is about orchestras and orchestral music, conductors and artists, written more from the ranks of the orchestra's members than any music writing recently published. It is terribly funny and very hard headed. One great advantage is that a professional musician takes music for granted much more than amateurs, scholars and those who feel a snobbish obligation to "appreciate" music and its makers.

The Hollywood section, "A Cog in the Wheel," is really enlightening, if you can bother about that through the succession of stories about the people. "The Boys Are Marching" gets nearer to Mr. Levant's tastes and ideals than any of the rest, and the Gershwin biography is the most literary section, successfully and not pretentiously.

To the extent that the "smattering" is of autobiography as well as of clever anecdotes and off-hand judgments, the main theme is perhaps the way the author has deliberately tried to sublimate his competitive urge, or, as he would call it (fearsome of Freud), his envy. He has a definite inhibition about being inhibited. No suppressed jealousy shall make his inner person nastier than his exterior, and this resolve taxes his sharp tongue. The effort to keep ahead of himself is in the romantic and picturesque school, and his feeding, sheltering and clothing, sleeping and waking fit right in. It all might be called

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an even break between that "integrity" and a favorite form of sentimentalism. By now people and the public certainly like Mr. Levant, and respect his work adequately. He might well expand his manner. PHILIP BURNHAM.

FICTION

Artillery of Time. Chard Powers Smith. Scribner. $2.75.

TURNING from poetry and criticism to the novel, Chard Powers Smith has written a tragedy of the decline and fall of the rural Yankee democracy that flourished in the period before the Civil War. With the critic's awareness of cultural movements, he has produced a set of characters whose thoughts and destinies are not purely personal but symbolic. Squire Lathrop, Yankee farmer of Blackwater County, New York, represents the old order. A descendant of the Puritans, he has given up Calvinistic theology for Emerson's individualism, but is still filled with the older moral attitudes, above all with a conviction that a life devoted to getting money is contemptible. One son, John, continues the family tradition, differing from the Squire principally is that he is more bellicose and more dogmatic in his idealism. Ike, however, another son, the most elaborately studied character, breaks with family traditions and turns his hand enthusiastically and successfully to getting money. John goes off to fight for the union. Ike stays home to make guns. Abolition, temperance, women's rights, all play a part in the life of Tavie Samson, the principal woman character, and her private interpretation of the doctrine of the female reformer, Mrs. Lucretia Mott, leads her to an experiment in the new freedom that constitutes one of the main threads in the plot. The main concern of the book, however, is not the fate of individuals but the fate of a way of life.

Mr. Smith is careful to avoid letting his interest in cultural movements turn the work into an allegorical history of ideas. Minute attention to the *realia* of the period—a subject to which the author has obviously given considerable study—keep the work in close contact with concrete reality. So does the careful handling of the complex hero, Ike, who somehow becomes human and credible particularly towards the end. Only occasionally, as when Ike speaks of America's destiny as lying in everybody's "getting rich and comfortable with plenty of leisure," can the modern critic, with such phrases as "leisure civilization" in his head, be heard talking through his mid-nineteenth century character.

It would be tempting to question some of Mr. Smith's assumptions regarding the climate of opinion in the North about the time of the Civil War. Was, for example, the Yankee democratic idyl destroyed entirely by rebels against Yankee culture or were the germs of the capitalistic spirit already contained in the Puritanism the Yankees brought with them from Europe? How strong a resistance did the best representatives of Yankee culture actually make to the exploitation of immigrants during the early industrial period? The work raises such questions, but, since it is fiction, it is perhaps best to dismiss the author's implied conclusions regarding the intellectual milieu with the remark that they are, in any case, an interesting and effective artistic device.

Perhaps it is necessary to add that certain portions of the book might make it unsuitable for the young and for those easily offended by that frank treatment of sex which has become a convention of the modern novel.

CHARLES DONAHUE.

Verdun. Jules Romains. Knopf. $2.50.

IT IS when one lays down a book—superbly translated—like this eighth volume of "Men of Good Will" that one realizes how little literature has been written about the World War. It makes very little difference if one has read the other seven volumes; one may miss the excitement of meeting old friends under altered conditions—as we did—but "Verdun" is very much more than some concluding chapters of an overlong story. M. Romains possesses the perspective and the philosophic attitude essential to an historian. He has chosen, however, to write his History of His Own Times in a form that has been developed on the stage as the "Living Newspaper," and which is obviously a repercussion from the cinema: rapid character sketches, graphic backgrounds, current comment, in short a species of literary scenario. The Prelude, Book XV in this volume, is a critical survey of the battlefront up to February, 1915, with a satiric résumé of the High Command's impotence in the face of cosmic catastrophe, which junked all formulae guaranteed by Napoleon and Moltke. Armies of so vast a size possess a strange fluidity. They ooze over the surface of the earth; like stagnant water they remain in each forgotten scratch and crevice. Push them in at one point, they seep out at another; while the crack offensive armaments of 1914 proved to be only so much defensive capital.

Book XVI, "The Battle," is the account of the greatest engagement the world had yet seen between two entrenched armies. We exist among the scattered survivors of the cataclysmic bombardment; we watch the endless grey men advancing one by one very quietly—more like field hands than soldiers—we stop them here and there when the poilus jump up like lonely ghosts out of the shattered ground. It is a dangerous experiment in detailed description, as one too emotional incident might wreck the whole design, but M. Romains has the gift of so interlocking and controlling his scenes that they form one mosaic bound together with the greed of the profiteer, the vanity and selfishness of some of the staff; the resolution of the officers; the imperturbable optimism of Joffre and behind them all, Pétain, who pulled order out of chaos.

Perhaps the most interesting feature is the analysis of men's acceptance of war. First is the statement that man does what he is made to do much more readily than is generally admitted. He is willing to accept the hell of other men's making because he not only has some innate capacity for destructiveness but also for self sacrifice, combined with a primal urge for woman's applause of his heroism. There is also the ancient "Warrior Caste" instinct of being removed above the petty cares of daily living. But apart from all these, the author confesses there was at Verdun one motive common to all: that France and the French way of life was worth a battle! Thus M. Romains' philosophy dissolves into patriotism. It remains the only clear issue. The muddled attitude of soldier and general, of citizen and diplomat may account for the fact that the tragedy of Verdun is that it is still being fought. EUPHEMIA VAN RENSSELAER WYATT.

RELIGION

The Church Before Pilate. Edward Leen, C.S.Sp. Preservation Press. $1.00.

R. A. L. SMITH in *Blackfriars* (October, 1939) says about H. G. Wells's last book: "In describing the Communist Party as dogmatic ignorance and a giant with the head of a newt he gives himself over to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that mood of reckless unproved assertion which is all too common among a certain school of Catholic writers, when Marxist doctrine is at issue." I am very much afraid that this is true to a certain degree of Father Leen's book, in spite of its occasional brilliant passages and its originality of approach.

The author has his own theory on the cause for "red revolution." It is not the economic distress of the toiling millions. The devil only uses this "favorable occasion" for his malignant purposes. The whole thing called "red revolution" is only an attack on the Church. This strange theology of history climaxes in the author's question: "If the leaders of the Russian heresy were sincere in their efforts at social reform, why is it that, when they gain power, they never show a tendency to use that power to compel men to reduce to practice the program of economic reform outlined by the Popes?" Well, why is it? Because Communism is only a disguise of the devil.

But Hitler is another one. Capitalism is one. Freemasonry was one in Leo Taxil's time. So Luther was right when he sang in his famous hymn that the world is "full of devils." And it is true now, too. But one of the devils which fills the world is over-simplification of complex facts. Another one is the lack of understanding, charity, justice and selfless sacrifice on the part of God's own flock. The author's theory is that all would be well, if we understood the "folly of the cross and practiced it." That is nothing startlingly new. It would solve all problems that ever existed, the threat of red revolution too, of course.

The author denies the possibility of progress, except in science. And this progress "but serves to enable men to be more cruelly and pitilessly destructive." This is a pessimism which the Church has never accepted. An attack on shallow, liberalistic progressivism is necessary. The author is right. The mere passage of time and scientific progress do not do away with evil. But they are not unqualified causes of an increase of evil either.

I wonder, if "Lenin guarantees heaven here on earth"? At least such a statement needs qualification. The author says that this "Leninism" is the original "aberration perpetually renewed." "It has received a philosophical formulation in the writings of Immanuel Kant." "Truth and reality are a fabrication of the human mind. God is the imperative of the human will. . . . What man wills, that is good." Did Kant teach that? There, of course, is a connecting current of thought between Kant and Marx. But these things are more subtle than the author's apodictical statements would make us believe. Kant's problem is too subtle to be popularized for argument's sake. The author's formulations of Kant's are not Kant's formulations. An uninformed reader may go away with the idea that he now knows all about "that guy Kant." As Catholics we must stand for objectivity and realism.

This book has great merits and will appeal to many. Still, there is a very real danger that those who look for information may put it aside with a sureness of having "the" solution, which would be unwarranted. A discussion with an alert Marxist might be rather disconcerting and might have disastrous consequences for the defendant's own assuredness. If we want to debunk the fallacy of communism, statism and other caricatures of truth, we should first be sure that we see that they are caricatures of "truth" and second that we are attacking Marxism, not the picture we make of it for ourselves.

H. A. REINHOLD.

B. ALTMAN & CO.

now at once a year savings

Wamsutta

supercale sheets

72x108 in., 2.95

regularly 3.50

order your Wamsuttas from Altman, where you're assured of a complete line of sizes at good savings, all through January. Sizes before hemming.

63x108 in., regularly 3.15..**2.65**
81x108 in., regularly 3.95..**3.35**
90x108 in., regularly 4.35..**3.65**
cases 45x38½ in., reg. 90c..**75c**

for hemstitching: add 30c to each sheet, 15c to each case.

monogram special: add 75c to sheet, 60c to case; allow 3 weeks. Underline last name initial.

Altman sheets . . . fourth floor

Fifth Avenue at 34th Street Telephone MU. 9-7000
Also at Our East Orange and White Plains Shops

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORY—GIRLS' SCHOOLS

CALDWELL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

A Select Boarding and Day College

conducted by

The Sisters of St. Dominic
Caldwell, New Jersey

Accredited
Four Year Arts Courses
A.B. and B.S. Degrees
Small Classes—Select Faculty
Cultural Environment

25 Minutes from New York

New York and Jersey City buses pass the college.

SPRING TERM STARTS FEB. 1
Registration Daily Until 8 P. M.

For Information or Catalog, Address the Dean
CALDWELL COLLEGE, Mt. St. Dominic
Caldwell, N. J.

PIUS X SCHOOL OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart

133rd St. & Convent Ave., New York, N. Y.

Courses Offered

Gregorian Chant—Gregorian Accompaniment—Liturgical Singing—School Music, Tone and Rhythm Series—Organ, Piano, Vocal Lessons—and other branches of Music. Four Year Course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Music.

For further information address secretary.

ROSARY COLLEGE

River Forest, Suburb of Chicago

A Catholic College for Women

Conducted by the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Wis.
Accredited by the Association of American Universities.
Offers Courses in Modern Gaelic.
Junior Year may be spent abroad in Fribourg, Switzerland.

The Inner Forum

ON SUNDAY, January 14, 1940, was celebrated the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Interracial Council in New York. The celebration took place at the headquarters of the Council on Vesey Street and at Old St. Peter's Church, Barclay Street. Those in attendance included several hundred priests and laymen, white and colored, interested in the problems which arise from race relations. The guest of honor was the Reverend John LaFarge, S.J., who has devoted years of his priestly career to the spiritual and material welfare of the American Negro and who was one of the founders and promoters of the Council.

The event began with Mass at 9 in the morning in St. Peter's. After breakfast, the morning session took up its business in the Council's Martin de Porres Center. Father LeFarge discussed the foundations of good will; Father Gladstone O. Wilson, Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese of Kingston, Jamaica, and himself a Negro, then spoke on "The Mass and the Catholic Interracial Movement." His principal emphasis was laid upon the idea that if the Mass were sufficiently understood, there would be no interracial problem for Catholics, since the idea of the Mystical Body and of the corporate worship of that Mystical Body precludes social injustice, promotes the brotherhood of all men under the fatherhood of God.

After luncheon an afternoon session was devoted to a panel discussion, "Interracial Hearing," in which the principal speaker was the Reverend William J. Walsh of St. Ignatius Church, Philadelphia. The panel committee to promote questions and discussion consisted of the Reverends James M. Gillis, C.S.P., of the *Catholic World;* Gladstone Wilson, Michael D'Arcy, S.J., of Fordham University; James W. Asip, of St. Peter Claver Church, Brooklyn; Raymond G. Schouten, S.J., Regent of the Fordham University School of Social Science; and Brother A. Cassian of Manhattan College. Father Walsh stated his view very strongly: "Until Catholics as a whole change their attitude towards the Negro, until they see the Negro not as a pariah, but the flesh of their flesh and the bone of their bone, the Negro Apostolate shall continue along in a half-hearted manner, with little augmentation of Negroes within the fold of Christ."

The celebration closed with solemn Vespers of the Blessed Virgin and Benediction at St. Peter's Church.

CONTRIBUTORS

Louis J. A. MERCIER is professor of French at Harvard University and author of "The Challenge of Humanism."

Tom BOGGS is a lyric poet now living in Missouri who has compiled several anthologies, the last being "Lyrics in Brief."

Robert McDONOUGH is on the New England staff of *Variety*.

Rev. C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J., is an English Jesuit, the author of "The Mind of the Missal" and many other books and articles.

Roger SHAW was managing editor of the *Review of Reviews;* he has recently returned from Ireland.

Guillermo V. SISON is a Filipino poet teaching English at the University of Santo Tomás, Manila.

Euphemia Van Rensselaer WYATT is dramatic critic of the *Catholic World*, lecturer, essayist.

Rev. H. A. REINHOLD is stationed in Seattle, Wash.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED